ॐ

For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways.—*Book of Job, Chap. xxxiv, verse 11.*

THE PATH.

VOL. IX. JUNE, 1894. No. 3.

The Theosophical Society, as such, is not responsible for any opinion or declaration in this Magazine, by whomsoever expressed, unless contained in an Official Document.

Where any article or statement has the author's name attached, he alone is responsible, and for those which are unsigned the Editor will be accountable.

THE REAL BASIS OF ASTROLOGY.

IN attempting to arrive at any philosophical explanation of Astrology it will be necessary for us to regard the solar system in several aspects. If, for instance, we were to consider the sun in a purely physical sense, we should find him to be the source of life and heat. He might also be conceived as the parent of the planets that lie within his circle of attraction, inasmuch as they are supposed to have originally sprung from him, according to the commonly-accepted Nebular Hypothesis. But having proceeded thus far, we have come to the end of knowledge regarding the Sun's properties so far as defined by astronomical science. In the same way taking up Saturn, Jupiter, and the other planets, we find that they have no relation with each other except such as is expressed by the general law of attraction. Astronomy is thus seen to be limited in its scope to the physical or the material aspect of the planetary bodies.

ASTROLOGY A HIGHER ASPECT.

But is this all? Is there nothing beyond? May we not by careful study and analysis discover some elements existing in the sun and his satellites which are not recognized by materialistic science, and which may throw some light upon the problems of planetary existence? The ancients thought so, and the oldest

science known and taught among men was the science of astrology. Just how far they reasoned out the rules governing the movements and influences of the planets we cannot tell. That part of astrology has never been divulged, being probably retained as something occult and pertaining to advanced initiation. What they did transmit was merely a set of empirical rules and statements which were essentially exoteric. Perhaps it was just as well, as in this Kaliyuga of physical science astrology was bound to be neglected, and sneered at, and denounced in any event, whether its rationale was revealed or kept secret. There has, however, been published one book in recent years wherein are given many hints and suggestions by which any student, if so inclined, might do much towards reconstructing the science of astrology and placing it upon a basis of reason instead, as it is now, of empiricism. I refer, of course, to the *Secret Doctrine*.

MICROCOSMIC ANALOGY.

In all speculative inquiries, whether in the field of physics or metaphysics, there is no argument which appeals to reason more forcibly than that of analogy. "As above, so below." This phrase expresses the intimate relation and correlation between microcosm and macrocosm. Do we not recognize the fact that law and order permeate the universe? Students of occultism learn as one of their earliest lessons that Man is ever to be regarded as the microcosm and external Nature the macrocosm, or, in other words, that the same general laws or tendencies governing mankind are also exhibited in the natural world. This analogy being once clearly established, it is comparatively easy to understand that the planets and the Sun, like Man, may have a manifold constitution, and may be regarded in many different aspects. The astronomical view is manifestly the lowest, as it comprises only their physical or material attributes.

PLANETS VARIOUSLY DEVELOPED.

Let us take as a starting-point, therefore, the well-known seven principles of Man. These may doubtless be applied to each of the planets. At first sight, this may seem perplexing and difficult to prove, at least in its entirety. Where, it may be asked, is the Atma or the Astral body of Saturn, for instance? This is a question that would be very hard to answer without a key. Fortunately that key is at hand. It is as follows: that while all of the seven principles are inherent in each planet, they may and probably do have different degrees of development. We know that in the stone and the plant and the animal these seven principles

exist, though partly latent. In the animal kingdom, for instance, only the four lower principles have as yet found expression, the others remaining in abeyance or undeveloped. So, with the planets, it may be that only a partial development has as yet been attained in some, while others have reached a higher stage. This supposition is doubtless hypothetical, and of course cannot be proven by any appeal to the five senses ; yet analogically it is extremely reasonable and more than probable. If it is so, and if the seven planets possess higher attributes distributed among them in varying degrees, then we can begin to understand, or, at any rate, obtain an inkling of, the real basis of astrology.

ORIGIN OF THE ZODIAC.

Reference has been made to the Sun as the parent of his satellites. This is explained by the Nebular Hypothesis. It has been shown by Madame Blavatsky in the *Secret Doctrine* (Vol. 1, page 588) that the Nebular Hypothesis is a theory which only partially accounts for the formation of suns and planets generally. In reality, it only throws back the inquiry as to the origin of the Cosmos one step, leaving still unexplained the origin of matter, out of which nebulæ were evolved. However, accepting the Hypothesis in its material aspect as probably true, we see how, in accordance with its provisions, the Sun, in turning upon its axis and at the same time moving forward in space, threw off or left behind at different epochs masses of nebulous matter which themselves revolved in the same direction around the Sun and gradually hardened into worlds. As these planets were stripped off from the Sun's equator, they must necessarily have passed off in the same direction into space, and consequently they have ever since moved upon the same plane, although at varying distances from the central nebula.

These planets are all revolving at varying rates of speed around the sun. Hence it follows that we upon the earth, in looking at the different planets, would always see them travelling in the same path across our apparent sky. That path, which extends about 8 degrees on each side of the ecliptic, is called the zodiac.

COMPOSITION OF THE SUN.

If we proceed to view the different planetary bodies in a higher aspect than the merely astronomical, we shall find that they possess certain characteristics or properties which vary with their varying degrees of development. The Sun, for instance, has from time immemorial been known astrologically as the "giver of life." If this be a true denomination, then we must suppose

that all life as it exists upon this, and doubtless upon other globes, is derived from the Sun. Life must come from some source, and certainly we cannot trace its origin anywhere on our earth. Yet the life principle is universally diffused, and may be detected in a greater or less degree of development in every atom of matter whether organic or inorganic. This would have been a bold statement to make in public only a very few years ago, but to-day it requires no argument, being generally admitted by the scientific world. Certainly the latest investigations of physicists tend to corroborate the ancient astrological theory of the origin of life. It is now conceded that the photosphere of the Sun is not composed of fire, as was so long supposed, but is a magnetic or electric envelop. Nor is it very difficult to believe that the phenomenon called life is a certain phase or differentiation of the same mysterious force which in its lowest physical manifestation is known as electricity. In an article on the "Source of Heat in the Sun" in the *Popular Science Monthly*, Mr. Robert Hunt, F.R.S., wrote as follows:

"Arago proposed that this envelop should be called the Photosphere, a name now generally adopted. By the elder Herschel the system of this photosphere was compared to mother-of-pearl. It resembles the ocean on a tranquil summer day, when its surface is slightly crisped by a gentle summer breeze. Mr. Nasmyth has discovered a more remarkable condition than any that had previously been suspected, objects that are peculiarly lens-shaped like willow-leaves, different in size, not arranged in any order, crossing each other in all directions, with an irregular motion among themselves The size of these objects gives a grand idea of the gigantic scale upon which physical operations are carried out in the Sun. They cannot be less than 1,000 miles in length, and from 200 to 300 miles in breadth. The most probable conjecture which has been offered respecting those leaf or lens-like objects is that the photosphere is an immense ocean of gaseous matter in a state of high incandescence, and that they are perspective projections of the sheets of flame. . , . But regarding Life—Vital Force—as a power far more exalted than either light, heat, or electricity, and, indeed, capable of exerting a controlling power over them all, we are certainly disposed to view with satisfaction that speculation which supposes the photosphere to be the primary seat of vital power, and to regard with a poetic pleasure that hypothesis which refers the solar energies to life."

From the above statement it may be seen how modern science treads upon the heels of ancient wisdom, astrology having always denominated the Sun as "hyleg," the giver of life.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE OTHER PLANETS.

In the admission of this hypothesis of life as emanating from the Sun, we have at once stepped beyond and outside of the physical and material aspect of the great luminary. If all life proceeds from him, then each individual life must also depend upon the common origin, and we are launched upon the sea of astrology. The direct connection between the Sun, 93,000,000 miles distant, upon the health, and consequently to that extent upon the destiny, of every human being, is established. But the influence of other planets upon the inhabitants of earth is less easy of comprehension. Yet even here the law of analogy may hold to some extent. If the Sun has an acknowledged effect upon all of earth's people, the other planets should also possess some influence, even though in a varying degree. Notwithstanding their varying size, it is well known that the power of their attraction is sufficient to cause a considerable variation in the eccentricity of the earth's orbit, and if they possess such influence on the physical plane, why should they not have as much, or even greater, influence upon the astral or psychic plane? Astrology teaches that such is the case, and assigns to each planet a certain kind and degree of such influence. Thus the planet which we familiarly know as Mercury has in all ages and in all nations and in all languages stood as the representative of wisdom. In Sanskrit he was called Buddha, Lord of Wisdom; in Iranian or Chaldæan, Nebo, knowledge; in Egyptian, Thoth or thought. On account of his proximity to the Sun, he was said to receive seven times as much light and life as the earth. In modern exoteric astrology he governs the constructive, the inventive, the intuitive faculty which finds expression in literary or commercial excellence. Originality, at least such originality as can be said to exist, comes from Mercury, the "messenger of the gods".

In Venus is again exemplified the wonderful symbolism of the East. Hindu astrology from the earliest times considered this planet as having two aspects, in one being known as Sukra, the bright, the shining, and in the other and lower aspect as Usanas, desire. In these names are allegorized the dual and differing influences which Venus exercises upon humanity. In her higher aspect she is the "lesser fortune" of exoteric astrology, shedding a mild and benevolent ray upon the soul of man, inclining him to the gentler affections of family and kindred, and the ties of friendship and social intercourse. She thus lightens up a world otherwise dark, and too often full of sorrow and care. But in her character as Usanas she typefies the lower form of desire, which,

carried to excess, leads to so much misery and wrong. This is the true explanation of the influence of Venus. Later astrologers lost the key and confused her significations. Sukra-Usanas became Lucifer-Venus, and the dual name was thought to refer only to her appearance at various seasons in the year as evening and as morning-star. The name Venus was derived directly from Usanas, and Sukra, the shining one, became Lucifer, the bright, the morning-star. And then, last of all, the church took a hand and formulated a theory or, rather, a myth — whichever you choose to call it — still further degrading the noble conception of the early Aryan star-gazers. She decided that, as the loftier aspect of Venus had disappeared from Latin astrology and only the grosser aspect prevailed, Lucifer should be considered as a fallen angel, as a basis for the myth of Satan, in fact; and that idea has descended to the present day among even the orthodox Protestants, who are not generally aware of its Romanist origin.

In the name of Jupiter is found an argument for the Hindu claim to the invention of astrology. The Latin word "Jupiter" is borrowed from Greek mythology, where the father of the gods is called "Zeus pater," but this is manifestly a direct copy from the Sanskrit "Dyaus pitar," father of heaven, an epithet of Indra. The word "Zeus" has no meaning, but "Dyaus" in Sanskrit has a very definite interpretation. The root "div" means "to shine", and hence its application to the sky. Our word "day" is directly evolved from it. In the same way the Aryans, reverencing the sky with all its starry host, came to regard it as "divine", and "dyaus", which originally meant bright and shining, passed into Greek as Zeus, the god of gods. Astrology very appropriately considers Jupiter as governing the religious faculty in Man, and he also indicates judgment and reason. He is the greater benefic, and his influence under favorable directions is always for the highest and most permanent good. The Sun may bring glory, and Mercury may induce fame, but Jupiter confers more lasting and substantial benefits by penetrating the inner nature and stimulating the spiritual growth.

In Saturn we have the antithesis of Jupiter. He is the "greater infortune", and, indeed, to his baleful influence may be traced nearly all of the misfortune with which humanity is afflicted. The name "Saturn" can be traced to Sut or Sut-Typhon, the dragon of Egyptian mythology, the evil spirit, the spirit of darkness, from which Christianity educed the conception of the devil, even borrowing the very name and calling this personage Satan. Yet Saturn did not originate in Egypt. Like

almost every other important mythical idea and metaphysical thought, we can trace this one back to India, where Asita, the evil one, means literally that which is black. To this day in exoteric astrology Saturn always represents a dark person. And even such a simple, everyday word as soot, in English, the black particles of smoke deposited in chimneys, comes from the same ancient source. So, too, Saturn's day has always been the seventh day of the week in all nations and all languages. Among the Egyptians Sut-Typhon was so dreaded that his day was set apart for special prayer and worship, a custom which was subsequently taken up by the Hebrews and continued by them up to the present time.

The etymology of Mars is equally interesting. Of course we are familiar with its Greek form, "Ares", which doubtless came from the Egyptian Artes. Yet neither of these names has any inherent significance. It is only when we again refer to the Sanskrit that light appears. Here the name appears as Ava, and it means primarily a corner, an angle, hence anything sharp or cutting. This gives us the key to the influence of Mars. He is not peaceful and pleasant, but quarrelsome and sudden. He presides over battles as the Roman god of war, and in sickness he produces violent and sharp attacks such as fevers and apoplexy. All lingering diseases are due to Saturn. Therefore is Mars termed the "lesser infortune." The good aspects of Mars, however, confer advancement in military life, and sometimes even produce marriage, but in the latter case there is seldom any real affection, marriage being suddenly brought about by an influx of mere passion. It is an aphorism in astrology that people born with Mars in Aries on the ascendant always have a scar upon the face. The reason for this is said to be that when Mars comes exactly to the ascendant he causes an accident, and as Aries rules the head, it will take the form of some cut or bruise which will show through life upon the countenance.

Although the earth is not usually considered in exoteric astrology to have any influence, at least upon the lives of its own inhabitants, it may be interesting to know that our planet, like the others, possesses marked characteristics. How gratifying it would be to us if we could only define those characteristics as being of a lofty and noble order. Bnt alas! such is not the case. From the most ancient times the earth has stood for all that is ignoble and material and base and unspiritual. In order not to offend the susceptibilities of people, dwellers upon this globe—"of the earth earthy"—astrology has kindly cast a veil over our weakness, and

hidden under the disguise of an assumed name the symbol which designates our planet and its influence. The term "part of fortune" expresses to a limited degree the nature of that influence It does, indeed, represent the merely temporal prosperity of the native. It measures, so to speak, the exact size of the pile of dollars or other kinds of money and property which each person is able to accumulate in a lifetime. The existence of the Part of Fortune is disputed by some modern astrologers on the ground that it is purely a figment of the imagination, yet Claudius Ptolemy laid great stress upon it, and as he derived his rules from Egyptian and Chaldæan predecessors, it would seem as though there must be some foundation for it.

HELIOCENTRIC AND GEOCENTRIC ASTROLOGY.

The mere fact of the Part of Fortune, or Earth, being included in all ancient horoscopes is an indication that at one time astrology was based upon the heliocentric system. According to the present geocentric theory which constructs a horoscope about the earth as a centre, it would seem absurd to introduce the same Earth again in the same horoscope as a planet or satellite of itself. Yet if at a remote epoch the heliocentric system was in vogue, the Earth would certainly figure along with Mars, Venus, and the other planets. And if, then, at a subsequent period the science was purposely or ignorantly muddled by being changed into a geocentric scheme, the Earth might very naturally survive as a feature of the horoscope, changed only in name to the Part of Fortune.

The principal objection urged against astrology at the present day is the fact that it implies a geocentric arrangement of the heavens. We all know how Copernicus revolutionized modern astronomy by introducing, or perhaps revamping, the heliocentric theory, and everyone knows what a tremendous step forward was thus taken in our knowledge and understanding of the movement of all bodies in our solar system. And it is therefore quite natural to denounce astrology as false because it still adheres to the geocentric arrangement. Yet the comparison is not entirely perfect. We mortals are dwelling upon this Earth, and according as the other planets revolve and focus upon us their rays, so are we, according to the astrological theory, affected. So, to all intents and purposes, we may truly consider them as circling around the earth as a centre, and in that fashion construct our horoscopes. If we were living upon Mars, it would be equally appropriate to place Mars in the centre, and likewise if we were denizens of the Sun we would put the Sun in the centre, in which

case we would have truly and as a matter of fact a system of heliocentric astrology.

I have brought forward this view of the subject to show that astrology should not be condemned solely on account of its geocentric proclivities, and to answer the criticism of R. A. Proctor and other scientific writers. Yet, having made that defense, I am ready to admit that the astrology of the future will probably be heliocentric. The cycles and epicycles of Ptolemy answered their purpose for fifteen hundred years, and afforded a tolerably reasonable account of the motions of the planets. So, too, and perhaps in a yet greater degree, geocentric astrology has fulfilled the necessary conditions of horoscopy. Various attempts, on the other hand, have been made to construct a heliocentric system, but so far without success.

PRECESSION OF THE EQUINOXES.

Another objection frequently brought against astrology is the fact that by means of the precession of the equinoxes the signs of the zodiac have since the time of Ptolemy passed entirely out of the constellations after which they were named. This appears to be a more difficult question to meet than the previous one. Yet Ptolemy was fully aware of this constant change in the position of the signs, for he distinctly provided in the *Tetrabiblos* for this contingency. He said in Book I, Chap. xii.:

"The beginning of the whole Zodiacal circle (which in its nature as a circle can have no other beginning or end capable of being determined) is, therefore, assumed to be the sign Aries which commences at the vernal equinox."

It will thus be seen that Ptolemy, and doubtless other astrologers before him, considered the influence of the Zodiacal signs as belonging to the places which they occupied, and not to the stars of which they were composed.

Ashmand says: "He (Ptolemy) has expressly and repeatedly declared that the point of the vernal equinox is ever the beginning of the Zodiac, and that the 30 degrees following it ever retain the same virtue as that which he has in this work attributed to Aries, although the stars forming Aries may have quitted those degrees. The next 30 degrees are to be accounted as Taurus, and so of the rest. There is abundant proof throughout the *Tetrabiblos* that Ptolemy considered the virtues of the constellations of the Zodiac as distinct from the spaces they occupied."

DIRECTIONS AND TRANSITS.

Predictions in astrology are based upon three kinds of aspects,

which are known respectively as primary and secondary directions and local transits. These follow an obscure and inexplicable law of cycles, and, while apparently distinct, are in reality greatly dependent upon each other ; so much so, that if an astrologer consults but one kind, he will obtain very unsatisfactory and uncertain results. Primary directions depend upon the revolution of the earth upon its own axis every twenty-four-hours. In that time each planet apparently travels completely around us, making a circuit of 360 degrees. As in twenty-four hours these pass over the meridian 360 degrees, in one hour they will pass over 15 degrees, and one degree being equal to one-fifteenth of an hour, is therefore equivalent to four minutes. One degree of right ascension is considered equal to one year of time. Hence an error of four minutes in the time of birth will cause an error of one degree of right ascension or of one whole year in the subsequent life of the native. This is why it is so essential to know the exact moment of birth before drawing up a horoscope, or at least before attempting to forecast future events. And the lack of this information has been the cause of so many failures of astrologers in the past to accurately predict important occurrences. Fortunately there are rules by which the exact moment of birth may be ascertained and the truth of primary directions vindicated.

It is comparatively easy to compute secondary directions. They are said to be "merely the aspects formed by the Sun or Moon within a few weeks after birth by their proper motion in longitude in the heavens." But this definition fails to convey any meaning to the ordinary reader. I would add in explanation that, following the same law of cycles as is manifested in primary directions, although in a slightly different aspect, each day succeeding birth is considered as equivalent to a year of subsequent life. Thus the tenth day after birth will show events that will happen in the tenth year, the twentieth day the twentieth year, and so on. Secondary directions indicate affairs of secondary importance, yet whose effects last several weeks or months, while primary directions denote the greater occurrences and epochs of a career, frequently extending over a series of years, during which time a person is said to be uniformly lucky or unlucky as the case may be.

Local transits are extremely simple and are generally employed by professional astrologers. They are based upon the direct motion of the planets around the Sun. While to the observer of the heavens night after night the planets which are visible appear to retain about the same relative position to each other, in

reality they are moving onward at varying rates of speed, and each night take a slightly different position. While our earth completes the circuit of the Sun in one year, it takes about thirty years for Saturn to finish his orbit. Each planet has a different rate of speed. Hence the combinations of position that arise daily are practically infinite. The local transits are the transits of one planet over the place of another in any nativity. They produce the minor events of life, the daily cares, annoyances, triumphs, and joys which everyone has, but which do not as a rule occasion any lasting effect. If, however, there is a coincidence of several evil transits at about the same time, particularly if the primary and secondary directions are also bad, then serious results may be expected. It is said that even primary directions cannot take effect without having transits of a similar nature to work through, and on this many professional astrologers ignore primary directions altogether, claiming that the local transits furnish all the data required for making predictions. In reality the reason for such omission is the difficulty of computing such primary directions. Local transits, on the other hand, require no mathematical skill or labor. The positions of the planets from day to day are given in every ephemeris or almanac published.

EMPIRICAL RULES.

It may be inferred from the foregoing hasty sketch of the main features of astrology that there is much in the science, as at present taught and practised, which cannot be understood. We read the rules laid down in the books, but no analysis is able to make clear to us their reason. Taking the aspects, for instance, no one can tell why a square, which implies four, should consist of only three signs of the Zodiac, while trine, implying three, should in reality embrace four signs or houses. Many other perplexing features arise to embarrass the student. It may be admitted without argument that a large part of the science is empirical. We have simply inherited a mass of rules and aphorisms which may be applied blindly, and our only consolation is that when properly used they generally bring about results which tally with the actual facts. We may not know why a certain direction in some person's horoscope will produce decidedly good or malefic effects, but that such effects are produced is proven to us again and again, until even the most skeptical must acknowledge the verification. Perhaps the empiricism is incident to the materialism of the age. It may be that with greater psychic development, or at any rate development of the intuitive intelligence, many of these blind rules will be made plain.

PRESENT ASTROLOGICAL STATUS.

In the meanwhile it is not by any means safe to sneer at this most ancient of all sciences, or even to belittle its importance at the present day. The mistakes of professional astrologers, the vain pretenses of vulgar charlatans, the lack of earnest and thorough study on the part of those who are by nature qualified to succeed in it, are all drawbacks which combine to hide a knowledge of astrology from the world at large, and thus render it essentially occult. Yet no one can investigate its claims in an unprejudiced spirit, or even pursue the study of it to a limited extent, without coming across sufficient evidence to prove that there is really something in it,—that it is not all a mere imaginary scheme. Individual assertion is, of course, of little value in a matter of this kind, else the testimony of the wisest men of all ages would not be so contemptuously disregarded as it is by the self-sufficient, materialistic, scientific writers of to-day. Doubtless there is room for improvement in the art and practice of astrology as it is now set forth, yet the errors and misconceptions of its practitioners are far more than outweighed by the constant verification of its rules and principles. What it wants is not ignorant abuse and denunciation, but serious investigation and study. Perhaps the twentieth century, whose dawn is already heralded by a widening of the range of human thought and a breaking down of the old walls of bigotry, will develop some intuitive soul who will see through the veils of empiricism by which astrology is now obscured, and so lift it up to the plane where it rightfully belongs as one of the keys to the mysteries of life and cosmic evolution.

GEORGE E. WRIGHT.

[The following article by Madame Blavatsky appeared in "Lucifer" for October, 1888, and has teaching value for Theosophists still.]

LODGES OF MAGIC.

"When fiction rises pleasing to the eye,
Men will believe, because they love the lie;
But Truth herself, if clouded with a frown,
Must have some solemn proofs to pass her down."

CHURCHILL.

ONE of the most esteemed of our friends in occult research propounds the question of the formation of "working Lodges" of the Theosophical Society, for the development of adeptship. If the practical impossibility of forcing this process

has been shown once in the course of the Theosophical movement, it has scores of times. It is hard to check one's natural impatience to tear aside the veil of the Temple. To gain the divine knowledge, like the prize in a classical tripos, by a system of coaching and cramming, is the ideal of the average beginner in occult study. The refusal of the originators of the Theosophical Society to encourage such false hopes has led to the formation of bogus Brotherhoods of *Luxor* (and Armley Jail?) as speculations on human credulity. How enticing the bait for gudgeons in the following specimen prospectus, which a few years ago caught some of our most earnest friends and Theosophists.

"Students of the occult science, searchers after truth, and "Theosophists who may have been disappointed in their expecta- "tions of Sublime Wisdom being freely dispensed by HINDU MA- "HATMAS, are cordially invited to send in their names to . . . . , "when, if found suitable, they can be admitted, after a short "probationary term, as Members of an Occult Brotherhood, who "do not boast of their knowledge or attainments, but teach "freely" (at £1 to £5 per letter?) "and without reserve" (the nast iest portions of P. B. Randolph's "Eulis") "all they find worthy "to receive" (read: teachings on a commercial basis; the cash going to the teachers, and the extracts from Randolph and other "love-philter" sellers to the pupils!)[1]

If rumor be true, some of the English rural districts, especially Yorkshire, are overrun with fraudulent astrologers and fortune-tellers, who pretend to be Theosophists, the better to swindle a higher class of credulous patrons than their legitimate prey, the servant maid and callow youth. If the "lodges of magic", suggested in the following letter to the Editors of this Magazine, were founded without having taken the greatest precautions to admit only the best candidates to membership, we should see these vile exploitations of sacred names and things increase an hundredfold. And in this connection, and before giving place to our friend's letter, the senior Editor of LUCIFER begs to inform her friends that she has never had the remotest connection with the so-called "H(ermetic) B(rotherhood) of L(uxor)", and that all representations to the contrary are false and dishonest. There is a secret body—whose diploma, or Certificate of Membership, is held by Col. Olcott alone among modern men of white blood—to

[1] Documents on view at LUCIFER'S Office, viz., Secret MSS. written in the handwriting of——(name suppressed for past considerations), "Provincial Grand Master of the Northern Section". One of these documents bears the heading, "A brief Key to the Eulian Mysteries," *i.e. Tantric* black magic on a phallic basis. No; the members of *this* Occult Brotherhood "do not boast of their knowledge". Very sensible on their part: least said soonest mended.

which that name was given by the author of *Isis Unveiled* for convenience of designation[1], but which is known among Initiates by quite another one, just as the personage known to the public under the pseudonym of "Koot Hoomi" is called by a totally different name among his acquaintance. What the real name of that Society is, it would puzzle the "Eulian" phallicists of the "H. B. of L." to tell. The real names of Master Adepts and Occult Schools are never, *under any circumstances*, revealed to the profane; and the names of the personages who have been talked about in connection with modern Theosophy are in the possession only of the two chief founders of the Theosophical Society. And now having said so much by way of preface, led us pass on to our correspondent's letter. He writes:

"A friend of mine, a natural mystic, had intended to form, with others, "a Branch T.S. in his town. Surprised at his delay, I wrote to ask the reason. "His reply was that he had heard that the T.S. only met and talked, and did "nothing practical. I always did think the T.S. ought to have Lodges in which "something practical should be done. Cagliostro understood well this craving "of humans for something before their eyes, when he instituted the Egyptian "Rite and put it in practice in various Freemason lodges. There are many "readers of *Lucifer* in ——shire. Perhaps in it there might be a suggestion "for students to form such lodges for themselves, and to try, by their united "wills, to develop certain powers in one of the number, and then through the "whole of them in succession. I feel sure numbers would enter such lodges, "and create a great interest for Theosophy. "A."

In the above note of our venerable and learned friend is the echo of the voices of ninety-nine hundredths of the members of the Theosophical Society: one hundredth only have the correct idea of the function and scope of our Branches. The glaring mistake generally made is in the conception of Adeptship and the path thereunto. Of all thinkable undertakings that of trying for Adeptship is the most difficult. Instead of being obtainable within a few years or one lifetime, it exacts the unremittent struggles of a series of lives, save in cases so rare as to be hardly worth regarding as exceptions to the general rule. The records certainly show that a number of the most revered Indian Adepts became so despite their births in the lowest, and seemingly most unlikely,

[1] In *Isis Unveiled* vol. ii. p. 96. It may be added that the "Brotherhood of Luxor" mentioned by Kenneth Mackenzie (*vide* his *Royal Masonic Cyclopædia*) as having its seat in America, had, after all, nothing to do with the Brotherhood mentioned by and known to us, as was ascertained after the publication of *Isis* from a letter written by this late Masonic author to a friend in New York. The Brotherhood Mackenzie knew of was simply a Masonic Society on a rather more secret basis, and, as he stated in the letter, he had *heard of, but knew nothing of our* Brotherhood, which having had a branch at Luxor (Egypt), was thus purposely referred to by us under this name alone. This led some schemers to infer that there was a regular Lodge of Adepts of that name, and to assure some credulous friends and Theosophists that the "H. B. of L." was either identical or a branch of the same, supposed to be near Lahore! !—which was the most flagrant untruth.

castes. Yet it is well understood that they had been progressing in the upward direction throughout many previous incarnations, and, when they took birth for the last time, there was left but the merest trifle of spiritual evolution to be accomplished, before they became great living Adepts. Of course no one can say that one or all of the possible members of our friend A's ideal Cagliostrian lodge might not also be ready for Adeptship, but the chance is not good enough to speculate upon: Western civilization seems to develop fighters rather than philosophers, military butchers rather than Buddhas. The plan "A" proposes would be far more likely to end in mediumship than Adeptship. Two to one there would not be a member of the lodge who was chaste from boyhood and altogether untainted by the use of intoxicants. This is to say nothing of the candidates' freedom from the polluting effects of the evil influences of the average social environment. Among the indispensable pre-requisites for psychic development, noted in the mystical Manuals of all Eastern religious systems, are a pure place, pure diet, pure companionship, and a pure mind. Could "A" guarantee these? It is certainly desirable that there should be some school of instruction for members of our Society; and had the purely exoteric work and duties of the founders been less absorbing, probably one such would have been established long ago. Yet not for practical instruction on the plan of Cagliostro, which, by-the-bye, brought direful suffering upon his head, and has left no marked traces behind to encourage a repetition in our days. "When the pupil is ready, the teacher will be found waiting", says an Eastern maxim. The Masters do not have to hunt up recruits in special ——shire lodges, nor drill them through mystical non-commissioned officers: time and space are no barriers between them and the aspirant; where thought can pass they can come. Why did an old and learned Kabalist like "A." forget this fact? And let him also remember that the potential Adept may exist in the Whitechapels and Five Points of Europe and America, as well as in the cleaner and more "cultured" quarters; that some poor ragged wretch, begging a crust, may be "whiter-souled" and more attractive to the Adept than the average bishop in his robe, or a cultured citizen in his costly dress. For the extension of the Theosophical movement, a useful channel for the irrigation of the dry fields of contemporary thought with the water of life, Branches are needed everywhere; not mere groups of passive sympathisers, such as the slumbering army of church-goers, whose eyes are shut while the "devil" sweeps the field: no, not such. Active, wide awake, earnest, unselfish Branches are need-

ed, whose members shall not be constantly unmasking their selfishness by asking "What will it profit us to join the Theosophical Society, and how much will it harm us?", but be putting to themselves the question "Can we not do substantial good to mankind by working in this good cause with all our hearts, our minds, and our strength?" If "A." would only bring his ——shire friends, who pretend to occult leanings, to view the question from this side, he would be doing them a real kindness. The Society can get on without them, but they cannot afford to let it do so.

Is it profitable, moreover, to discuss the question of a Lodge receiving even theoretical instruction, until we can be sure that all the members will accept the teachings as coming from the alleged source? Occult truth cannot be absorbed by a mind that is filled with preconception, prejudice, or suspicion. It is something to be perceived by the intuition rather than by the reason; being by nature spiritual, not material. Some are so constituted as to be incapable of acquiring knowledge by the exercise of the spiritual faculty; *e.g.* the great majority of physicists. Such are slow, if not wholly incapable of grasping the ultimate truths behind the phenomena of existence. There are many such in the Society; and the body of the discontented are recruited from their ranks. Such persons readily persuade themselves that later teachings, received from exactly the same source as earlier ones, are either false or have been tampered with by chelas, or even third parties. Suspicion and inharmony are the natural result, the psychic atmosphere, so to say, is thrown into confusion, and the reaction, even upon the stauncher students, is very harmful. Sometimes vanity blinds what was at first strong intuition, the mind is effectually closed against the admission of new truth, and the aspiring student is thrown back to the point where he began. Having jumped at some particular conclusion of his own without full study of the subject, and before the teaching had been fully expounded, his tendency, when proved wrong, is to listen only to the voice of his self-adulation, and cling to his views, whether right or wrong. The Lord Buddha particularly warned his hearers against forming beliefs upon tradition or authority, and before having thoroughly inquired into the subject.

An instance. We have been asked by a correspondent why he should not "be free to suspect some of the so-called 'precipitated' letters as being forgeries", giving as his reason for it that while some of them bear the stamp of (to him) undeniable genuineness, others seem from their contents and style to be imitations. This is equivalent to saying that he has such an unerring spiritual in-

sight as to be able to detect the false from the true, though he has never met a Master, nor been given any key by which to test his alleged communications. The inevitable consequence of applying his untrained judgment in such cases would be to make him as likely as not to declare false what was genuine, and genuine what was false. Thus what *criterion* has any one to decide between one "precipitated" letter, or another such letter? Who except their authors, or those whom they employ as their *amanuenses* (their *chelas* and disciples), can tell? For it is hardly one out of a hundred "occult" letters that is ever written by the hand of the Master in whose name and on whose behalf they are sent, as the Masters have neither need nor leisure to write them; and that when a Master says, "*I* wrote that letter", it means only that every word in it was dictated by him and impressed under his direct supervision. Generally they make their chela, whether near or far away, write (or precipitate) them, by impressing upon his mind the ideas they wish expressed, and if necessary aiding him in the picture-printing process of precipitation. It depends entirely upon the *chela's* state of development how accurately the ideas may be transmitted and the writing-model imitated. Thus the *non-adept* recipient is left in the dilemma of uncertainty whether, if one letter is false, all may not be; for, as far as intrinsic evidence goes, all come from the same source and all are brought by the same mysterious means. But there is another and a far worse condition implied. For all that the recipient of "occult" letters can possibly know, and on the simple grounds of probability and common honesty, the unseen correspondent who would tolerate one *single fraudulent line in his name* would wink at an unlimited repetition of the deception. And this leads directly to the following. All the so-called *occult* letters being supported by identical proofs, *they have all to stand or fall together.* If one is to be doubted, then all have, and the series of letters in the *Occult World*, *Esoteric Buddhism.* etc., etc., may be, and there is no reason why they should not be in such a case—*frauds*, "clever impostures", and "forgeries", such as the ingenuous though stupid agent of the "S.P.R." has made them out to be, in order to raise in the public estimation the "scientific" acumen and standard of his "Principals".

Hence, not a step in advance would be made by a group of students given over to such an unimpressible state of mind, and without any guide *from the occult side* to open their eyes to the esoteric pitfalls. And where are such guides, so far, in our Society? 'They be blind leaders of the blind", both falling into the ditch

of vanity and self-sufficiency. The whole difficulty springs from the common tendency to draw conclusions from insufficient premises, and play the oracle before ridding oneself of that most stupefying of all psychic anæsthetics—IGNORANCE.

FACES OF FRIENDS.

JAMES MORGAN PRYSE is our head printer, and he with his brother John must remain immortal among our annals. He came with his brother to New York in July, 1888, and enabled the editor of the PATH to start the Aryan Press for the printing of much needed Theosophical literature.

Brother Pryse was born in New London, a suburb of Cincinnati, Ohio, August 14th, 1859, and is of Welsh descent. His father was a Presbyterian minister in Cincinnati, where James spent his childhood. Both father and mother were born in Wales. It may be noted that Pryse is also the name of the recent Grand Druid of Wales. Being a minister's son James went from place to place in America, taking a high-school course and preparing in Latin, Greek, and the like for a college in Crawfordsville, Ind. Ill health, overstudy, and trying to do three years' work in a little over one spoiled these plans, and Bro. Pryse began to read law. At 17 he was ready for the bar, but not caring to spend four years as a clerk he went to Red Cloud, Neb., to the frontier. There for a while he ran a photograph gallery, but sold it out and entered a printing office, learned that business, edited a country paper, and with his brother John published other papers in various towns. They started an office at Anaconda, Mont., sold that out and began a paper at Prescott, Mich., and St. Paul. From there he went to Florida, and then up to Minnesota, where in January, 1886, he gave up printing and was admitted to the bar in the Circuit Court for the Eighth District of the State.

Intending to practise law he went to Lacrosse, Wis., but took a position as telegraph editor on the *Republican Leader* instead. Becoming what the Americans call "disgruntled" with all things, he joined a socialistic colony going to Sinaloa, Mex. A year was spent at Hammonton, N.J., doing the printing for the colony and helping to organize. While there he got into correspondence with Mrs. VerPlanck, who is now Mrs. A. Keightley, and resolved to work for the T.S. instead of for socialism. Bro. Pryse had never taken to any religion nor joined a church, and was too familiar

with psychic phenomena to be in sympathy with naturalism, yet took no interest in mere spiritualism, its phenomena being of no use and the utterances of its spirits being nonsense. He had been studying Fourier while holding to pantheism and reincarnation, and the instant he met Theosophy recognized it as that for which he sought. Then began a study of *Isis*, of the PATH, of all that could be found on Theosophy, as well as an invaluable correspondence with Mrs. VerPlanck. In July, 1887, he joined the T.S. at Los Angeles, and met there again his brother, by that time also full of Theosophy. From there both went to Peru and back to Panama, and from there to New York.

In August, 1889, Bro. Pryse went to London to start the printing office there named the H.P.B. Press, wherein the machinery is American. There he is still at work night and day. He has wandered over most of the States of the U.S., keeping himself foot-free for a possible work in the future. He and his brother cannot be erased, and while our books are read, though no printer's name is on them, yet the soul and the work of James M. Pryse are in them. That he is a printer of the highest ability no one can deny, that he is a man who has unselfishly worked for the T. S. is a fact that is recorded in the unimpeachable books of Karma. We show his counterfeit presentment.

MOON'S MYSTERY AND FATE.

PROBABLY no heavenly body has received as much attention from men in all ages as our moon. Many causes contributed to this. The moon is near us; she is a remarkable and large object in the sky; she enlightens the night; she appears to have much to do with man and his affairs. Omens, spells, wishes, oracles, divination, traditions cluster around her during all time. It would be difficult to find a scripture that does not exalt the moon. The Christian Bible says that God ordained that the sun should rule the day and the moon the night. The Roman Church depicts Mary the Mother of God holding the child while she stands upon the crescent moon. The twelfth chapter of Revelations opens thus:

> And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.

Other religions are the same as this modern Hebraic one in giving the moon a very great prominence.

Even science cannot escape the fascination. The brilliancy and nearness of the moon and her many recurring changes all aid in fixing the attention of science. Modern and ancient science alike unite in watching the night's great light as she performs her journey round us. Nations regulate themselves and their acts, religious and commercial, by the moon. Feast days of the church are fixed more by the lunar than the solar calendar, for all the movable feasts depend on the moon. Calendars rule commercial affairs in credits, obligations, and settlements.

From earliest times the calendar, ruled in fact by the moon's motion, has been of immense interest to man. Periodically rulers of the earth try to reform the calendar of days and months when it as periodically gets out of order. The present arrangement of months with twenty-eight, twenty-nine, thirty, and thirty-one days was invented to make a calendar which would last some centuries before another one will be needed, just because the moon's motion will not give twelve regular months, but twelve regular ones and one small one of about six days. And when the present style of reckoning was introduced, many communities of men in Europe rebelled because they thought they had been deprived of some actual days of life.

Cæsar ordered a reformation of the calendar by attempting to use the sun, but in time it fell into great confusion. Pope Gregory XIII. directed ten days to be suppressed, and then found that the Julian calendar had an error which would amount to three days in four hundred years—quite a serious matter. The Gregorian year now prevails, except in Russia. But still the greater number of men and the greater number of festivals depend on the moon and her motion. While if we examine the records relating to superstition, we will find that whatever may have been the place once held by the sun, it has been usurped by the moon, leaving one nation distinctly worshippers of the Lord of Day.

Modern Theosophy, coming on the field as the uniter of all religions by explaining the symbols and traditions of each, is not exempt from the mystery of the moon. H. P. Blavatsky is our sole originator of a theory regarding the satellite which one could not have invented with the most wonderful imagination. She says her teachers told her, and leaves us to work out the details; but her theory will bear investigation if taken as part of the whole evolutionary scheme reported by her. If we had thought to escape from lunar dreams and puzzles we were in error, for while she plainly asserts that the former body of the entity now called Man's Earth is the very moon in our sky, the ex-

istence of a mystery is as plainly declared. The first mystery which she claimed to reveal—and, indeed, she first of every one states it—is that in a remote period, when there was no earth, the moon existed as an inhabited globe, died, and at once threw out into space all her energies, leaving nothing but the physical vehicle. Those energies revolved and condensed the matter in space near by and produced our earth; the moon, its parent, proceeding towards disintegration, but compelled to revolve around her child, this earth. This gives us a use and history for the moon.

But then the same messenger says that the "superstition" prevailing so long and widely as to the moon's bad influence, as in insanity, in necromancy, and the like, is due to the fact that the moon, being a corpse intimately associated with earth, throws upon the latter, so very near to her, a stream of noxious emanations which, when availed of by wicked and knowing persons, may be used for man's injury. Then the same writer goes on to assert that six mysterious doctrines or facts remain yet untold, and all relating to the moon.

It would be idle to speculate on these mysteries, for it has ever been found that unless the Great Initiates speak the general run of men can but modify, enlarge, or intertwine by their fancy those facts and doctrines of which they have heard. But as to the fate of the moon, H.P.B., speaking for those Initiates, says plainly what is to become of our satellite.

In the first volume of *Secret Doctrine*, in a foot note on page 155 of the first edition, she writes:

> Both [Mercury and Venus] are far older than the earth, and before the latter reaches her seventh Round her mother moon will have dissolved into thin air, as the "moons" of the other planets have, or have not, as the case may be, since there are planets which have *several* moons—a mystery again which no Œdipus of astronomy has solved.

This is extremely plain as to our moon, yet raises another mystery as to the general subject of moons. If correspondence is a law of nature, as I firmly believe, then it would be in accordance with it for the moon, considered as earth's former body, to dissolve all away in course of time. And as evolution proceeds with uniformity, the upward progress of our races and earth should be marked by the gradual fading and final disappearance of the moon, as H.P.B. says. It is likely that before our sixth round is ended, it being the round relating to *Buddhi* as the vehicle of *spirit*, the body of the moon, which was the vehicle for *prana* and astral body, will have disappeared. Very probably one of the unrevealed mysteries has to do with the uses and pur-

poses of and for the whole mass of matter now constituting the moon's bulk. But whatever those mysteries are, the fate of our satellite is very clearly asserted, for the benefit of those who have confidence in H. P. B.'s teachers, and who are willing to take the key of correspondence for the unlocking of the lock of Nature.

WILLIAM BREHON.

A STUDENT'S NOTES AND GUESSES.

THE serpent symbol is a strange one. A cold, selfish creature, voiceless and limbless; capable only of spasmodic activity as it seeks to escape, to sting, or to gulp its living prey; its life is spent in sullenness and torpor; its sole ambition is to lie "untrodden in the sun".

With a minimum of brain capacity it exhibits correspondingly little intelligence, far less than that shown by many insects.

Yet the serpent has been chosen, among all races, as the symbol of intellectual power of every grade, from a subtle cunning to the wisdom of the gods. In the Jewish mythology, it is represented as tempting the first woman with a promise of divine wisdom and power: Hermes carries the caduceus as a token that he is a messenger between gods and men; the serpent accompanying Æsculapius signifies the healing power; Jesus exhorts his disciples to be "wise as serpents".

Mundane serpents have signified an all-sustaining and encompassing will and intelligence, both in India and the extreme north; and the serpent has been the symbol of the adept, from the far East to ancient Peru and Mexico. . . . .

Perhaps when St. Patrick drove the snakes from Ireland, he was the cause of its soil having ever since produced more wit than wisdom. . . . .

Look into the eyes of any living creature and you touch its soul. The dog seeks from yours something which he dimly feels and would fain comprehend. There is a look in his brown eyes as he fixes them upon yours, which is not there at any other time, which he fixes upon no creature except man, and which no animal but the dog is able to give.

As we look into the limpid fluorescent depths of a horse's eye, our sympathies go out to the fellow-being which looks out through that window. Even when it sparkles with spirit, it is still tempered with timidity. We feel its pathetic patience, which is above

that of the dull ox, an intelligence which is moral rather than intellectual, and we receive the impress of an instinctive nobility and unselfishness.

The patient drudge is quick to respond to our wants rather than to his own; a harsh word sets his pulses bounding; a kindly look awakens instant recognition.

Contrast this with the attentive, well-regulated selfishness which gleams from the yellow eyes of the cat, as she looks debating the chances of a morsel or the possible hospitalities of a comfortable lap. Watch the change from the receptive to the active, as she hears a mouse-like rustle, and the glare of the beast of prey shines out.

Or, as she steps softly along, you are aware that she has in mind either a warm corner by the fire, an amatory interview on a back fence, or a raid on the canary bird or an unguarded pantry. Self, and self only, is the center around which revolve the thoughts of this courtezan of the animal world.

That domestic Arab, the rat, has had his little brain quickened, for untold generations, by contact with civilization, by its warfare against him, by the dangers and rewards of his predatory and pariah life. You can read the whole story in the mingled impudence, fear, and cunning of his beady eyes as he faces you for a moment with his whiskers a-quiver, knowing as he does his exact distance from the nearest retreat.

Compare the eye of a rat with that of his third cousin, the squirrel. In that softer little orb you read not only the alertness of his tribe, but a milder curiosity and timidity. You are to him rather a strange and possibly dangerous visitor, than a giant hereditary enemy.

Greed and a limited shrewdness gleam from the small eyes of a pig, and when we see the like in a human being — we know what to expect.

What creature has the chilling, stony stare of the serpent? What can you read in those fixed eyeballs which suggests an emotion or a thought with which any human being ever had an instant of sympathy? Their effect is different from that which can be produced by any fixed glassy ball. You feel the consciousness of the creature as it meets some sphere of your own, but it is an icy and utterly selfish consciousness; you recoil from the psychic touch of the snake as you do from that of his body.

A writer in a recent number of the *Fortnightly Review*, in speaking of the serpent, says:

"The power of continuing motionless, with the lifted head projecting forward, for an indefinite time is one of the most wonderful of the serpent's muscular feats, and it is of the highest importance to the animal both when fascinating its victim and when mimicking some inanimate object, as, for instance, the stem and bud of an aquatic plant; here it is only referred to on account of the effect it has on the human mind, as enhancing the serpent's strangeness. In this attitude, with the round, unwinking eyes fixed on the beholder's face, the effect may be very curious and uncanny."

He goes on to quote the experience of an African traveller who discovered a snake at the bottom of a pool of water:

"Presently, without apparent motion, so softly and silently was it done, the snake reared its head above the surface and held it there erect and still, with gleaming eyes fixed on me in question of what I was. It flashed upon me then that it would be a good opportunity to test the power of the human eye upon the snake, and I set myself the task of looking it down. It was a foolish effort. The bronze head and sinewy neck, about which the water flowed without a ripple, were as if carved in stone; and the cruel unwinking eyes, with the light coming and going in them, appeared to glow the brighter the longer I looked. Gradually there came over me a sensation of sickening fear, which, if I had yielded to it, would have left me powerless to move; but with a cry I leaped up, and, seizing a fallen willow branch, attacked the reptile with a species of fury." . . . .

The fixity of the serpent's eye is not the cause of the peculiar impression which it makes. The eyes of fishes, though not as a rule immoveable, are moved but seldom and slightly. They have not that filmy blankness we see in the dead fish, from which the idea of the "fishy eye" has been derived. Study them in an aquarium (if you can do no better), and you find nothing unpleasant in the eyes of a fish; no matter how fixed they may be. They suggest rather a restful consciousness of existence, which hardly feels its own separateness; they recall in no way the stony selfishness of the snake.

If we are fishermen, we grasp the slimy scales of a prize with eagerness, while we would shrink from the less defiling touch of the most harmless snake.

Fixity, then, is not the cause of the repellent fascination that lurks in a serpent's eye.

Is it in the shape of his head?

Many lizards have heads closely resembling those of snakes,

both in color and shape, in fact often more calculated to inspire aversion, if critically examined. Their bodies are cold and scaly and tapering. The eyes of lizards vary in color and shape, as do those of serpents, but the expression is wholly different. Take, for instance, one of the little lizards that scuttle through the dry fallen leaves of our southern forests, or, squirrel-like, scamper up a tree and shift to the opposite side as we approach, or flatten themselves against the bark, with which they seem to blend. Fix the eye of one of these reptilian sprites, if you can, and you will find nothing repulsive in it. It is bright and inquisitive, what the women would call "cute", and you feel like feeding the little fellow with a fly, if you can convince him of your friendly intentions.

The toad is repulsive enough, even when impartially considered. Industry is not his forte, and there is a fixity in his freckled countenance as he waits patiently for what Providence may send in the shape of a fat bug, but no evil light shines from the little circular, golden-iris windows. They will but wink and roll if an occasional doubt crosses him as to the expediency of retaining on his stomach that strange-looking insect which just now he confidingly swallowed, as it was rolled toward him by some one (let us say a school boy).

. . . . The Egyptians derived their symbols from a period when men were in closer touch with the soul of the world than in these days of machinery. The manifold life which has built together the forms of dust looks out through many portals. In the ancient picture-teachings we find the human form surmounted by the head of the hawk or the jackal, the ibis, the cat, or the crocodile. The bull and the beetle were sacred symbols, degraded in a later age.

In all of these we may read of an all-pervading power and intelligence, manifesting through a potential humanity, through different aspects of evolving soul. Strength and swiftness, keenness and tenacity, intelligences working in earth, air, and water, were all recognized as parts of the whole, as co-ordinate psychic factors. Not one was despised as unworthy or contemptible.

The Miss Nancyism of the modern sectarian affects innocence and ignorance, and will have none of these things . . . except the lamb and the dove.

Yet in that elder and broader symbology we find the serpent erect, as the symbol of kingly power and occult wisdom.

Yet the serpent that crawls in the dust or glides through the

tangled swamp is a thing apart and accursed; it raises itself but to threaten, or to sting, or to paralyze with the steely steadfastness of its will. It is shunned by all that lives, by all that flies or runs; hated in forest and field. The only sound it can make is a hiss, and that sound is the only one common to the language of bird and beast and man. All who can use it mean but one thing when it is sent forth; malice, defiance, separateness.

And is this reptile, with its cruel eye, its crushing fold or poison tooth; which rejects even the freshly slain as its food; which must have a living, struggling victim; is this creature, because of its sinuous path or some fancied grace, to be taken as the type of anything to which we should aspire?

Instinct and common sense say No.

But, with one accord, the solemn picture-teachings of the ages, of Jew and Gentile, of India, Egypt, and America, point to some hidden mystery, to some occult combination of power and intelligence, of which, it may be, the serpent of the dust is but the degraded rudiment.

Who can read the riddle of the serpent?

X. R.

(To be continued.)

AN IMPORTANT DECISION.

"MAHATMA LETTERS."

THE following correspondence, which explains itself, is presented for the information of members. It was submitted to the 8th Convention of this Section and approved of after one reading and consideration in committee and convention. It was also forwarded to the European and Indian General Secretaries, who have decided similarly in another case:

144 MADISON AVENUE,
NEW YORK, *March 12, 1894.*

To William Q. Judge, Esq., Gen'l Sec'y, Am. Sec. T.S., New York, N.Y.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER: I desire to submit the following statement of facts for your consideration and opinion as a member of the Council of T.S.

A member, in good standing, of the T.S. has, at various times and until quite recently, sent me letters and messages which purport to emanate from one of the Masters spoken of by H. P. Blavatsky and supposed to be interested in the welfare of the said Society. In these letters and messages there is no attempt to imitate the supposed handwriting of the Master nor to convey any idea of so-called precipitation, but one letter is signed with the name, in full, of the Master whose message it purports to be, and others, whether signed or not, contain internal evidence that they are accepted as emanating from the same high source.

It has been suggested to me that a committee should be appointed to inquire into this matter on charges to be made that the sending of messages purporting to come from a Master, or Masters, is untheosophical, or that the proper officers of the T.S. should consider the matter to the same end.

I have replied that I consider this a matter into which a committee of the T.S. may not properly inquire; that I do not, for a moment, entertain the idea that it may be brought within the jurisdiction of the Society under any clause of its Constitution; that it can rightly be regarded as a matter between individuals only; that any such inquiry or determination of such a subject would only tend to raise a dogma in the Society, and, furthermore, that it seems desirable that some official statement of a general character should be made defining the Society's position on questions of this nature.

Sincerely Yours,

ELLIOTT B. PAGE,

A Fellow of the Theosophical Society.

No. 599.

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, AMERICAN SECTION,
GENERAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE, 144 MADISON AVENUE,
NEW YORK, *March 14, 1894.*

To Elliott B. Page, Esq.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER: I have your letter of 12th inst. informing me that a member of the T.S. (whose name you have privately given me) has sent you at various times "letters and messages which purport to emanate from one of the Masters spoken of by H. P. Blavatsky and supposed to be interested in the welfare of the said Society, and that one of the letters is signed with the name in full of the Master whose message it purports to be, but that in the letters there is no attempt to imitate the supposed handwriting of the Masters, etc." and asking me officially whether a committee could be properly appointed to consider the matter on the ground that such actions by said member are untheosophical. This could only be considered by the Society acting through a committee on the ground of being an offence under the Constitution of the T.S.; it is also a matter which should first be submitted to the Council and the President; it is competent in my opinion for you to raise the question as one of information, asking for a decision or opinion from the proper officers or Council. I shall therefore give you my opinion officially and then forward the same to the President and the Council. My opinion is:

First: The matter stated is not one which the Society or its officers can consider; it stands on the same ground as the affirmation of a member that he or she has seen or heard of or from a Mahâtmâ. On this see the public utterances of the President, Colonel Olcott; also those of Mrs. Besant; and the late publication by Mr. Sinnett, President of the London Lodge, to the effect that what he (Mr. Sinnett) published was directly from said Mahâtmâs. These are not offences in the T.S. for the reason that cognizable offences are these: Slander of members; violation of the T,S. neutrality on questions of legislation, politics, religion, caste, and social rules; violation of the rule that we have no dogma by proclaiming a dogma or belief as that of the T.S.; wilfully hurting the religious feelings of members at a meeting of Branch or Section; conviction of crime under the law of the land, and the like. In no place are the Mahâtmâs, their powers, existence, or functions mentioned. It is solely and simply a personal matter whether one shall or shall not affirm he has messages from the Mahâtmâs; it is also a personal matter whether other members shall or shall not believe him.

Second: It would be a violation of the Constitution to decide either negatively or affirmatively under the official shield of a T.S. Committee whether a person had or had not a message from the Mahâtmâs, and to consider the facts cited by you would involve preliminarily that affirmative or negative. The Society would thus through its Committee fix a dogma one way or the other; either the dogma that Mahâtmâs exist and may be heard from, or the opposite dogmatic statement that such Mahâtmâs do not exist.

On this I beg to refer you to the official statement by the President in his Executive Notice of May 27, 1893, respecting the T.S. Congress at the Parliament of Religions. He said: "Of course it is to be distinctly understood that nothing shall be said or done by any delegate or committee of the Society to identify it, as a body, with any special form of religion, creed, sect, or any

religious or ethical teacher or leader; our duty being to affirm and defend its perfect corporate neutrality in these matters".

This goes directly to the point, and was meant, as intimated to me by the President, to cover precisely the existence of the Mahâtmâs under the word "teacher" and to prevent any fixing of the T.S. to H. P. Blavatsky by means of the use of the word "leader". Hence we have in advance the decision in general of the President, in which the other members of the Council will concur, as I now do in advance.

Fraternally Yours,
WILLIAM Q. JUDGE,
General Secretary American Section and
Member of the T.S. Council.

CORRESPONDENCE.

EDITOR OF PATH: A Mrs. * * * near my California home has a little granddaughter, five years of age, who has never walked. She is physically weak or delicate, but intellectually very precocious. When but three years of age an educated gentleman happening to call heard her reading and asked the grandmother if it was not a great task to teach one so young to read like that. She answered that she thought that she must have taught herself from the letters on the cans she played with, but the child replied "No, grandma, I knew how to read before coming to this house to live", meaning before she was born.

Her grandfather spoke broken English, he being a German. After listening to him one day she said, "Grandpa, if you had attended school where I did, you would not have been allowed to talk so improperly as that". They asked her where that was, and she said it was when she lived in another house. "And, grandpa, you were not born then, I think". They did not then know anything about reincarnation, and I explained it to them and gave them leaflets to read. They now accept it. Little children can teach.

Yours truly,
A MOTHER.

LITERARY NOTES.

ARYAN THEOSOPHIST. "Old Diary Leaves XXV" is of extraordinary interest. It minutely describes the appearance to Col. Olcott at New York in astral body of the Master, with accompanying incidents, notably that of the turban,—an appearance, we may add, seen also and testified to by a lady not a Theosophist. The Col. narrates two cases in which he himself had projected his double, one of them illustrating "repercussion", and cites five instances of seeing clearly the doubles of others, three of them Adepts. Sepharial gives the horoscope of Mr. Gladstone, and shows how his postal cards are directly due to Jupiter. "Annie Besant's Indian Tour" is a glowing record of the almost royal progress of that truly royal woman, and in the splendid diction of Col. Olcott tells what she is and did. He truly speaks of "this five months' intellectual feast, this banquet of rhetoric and wisdom", and eloquently describes her lofty religiousness, her profound devotion. It is a tribute from one of the most charming of writers to one of the most glorious of characters.—[A. F.]

THEOSOPHICAL SIFTINGS, Vol. VII, No. 3, gives "Neo-Platonism" by E. W. Ward, and "Reincarnation" by R. Machell. The former prefaces an analysis of the doctrine with a sketch of its ablest exponents, and the style is peculiarly pleasing, with neat touches and a musical flow. The text is far more lucid than the quotations. Why shouldn't composition be better after fifteen centuries of practice? "Reincarnation" has many pregnant thoughts and suggestions, advocates independent efforts to grasp truth, and most truly says that "we only know a thing when we can express it in our own language and in different ways". The metaphors on the last page are a little

mixed, but the idea is clear. If *Siftings* continues through the year as it has begun, those who have saved their $1.25 will be a good deal poorer than richer.—[A.F.]

THE NORTHERN THEOSOPHIST for May has its "Editor's Remarks" as fresh and sprightly and sound as heretofore, their combination of geniality and sense giving delightful flavor. The subscription is only one shilling and six pence per year. It would be nice if the editor would contribute some of his thought to the American *Forum*.—[A.F.]

THE PACIFIC THEOSOPHIST for May prints a most interesting address by the Countess Wachmeister before April Convention upon "The Theosophical Society". The method of H.P.B.'s entrance into Tibet is described, and an outline of her tuition there and in Egypt. The remarks upon the power of thought are especially strong and good.—[A.F.]

LIGHT OF THE EAST has an undoubted right to oppose Theosophy and the T.S. if its convictions are adverse, but surely no cause can be advanced by the publication of so indescribably vulgar an article as that in the April issue called "History of the T.S." It is taken from *The Buddhist Ray*. If the question was merely of slang, or even deliberate misrepresentation, one might let it pass as lack of refinement or truth; but coarseness so gross, so redolent of the stable, so disclosive of the character and habitat of the being who could use it, can only have been quoted, it is fair to suppose, because of partial unfamiliarity with English. Indian gentlemen, no less than American, must instinctively revolt from vulgarity of speech, and from editors' sanctums as well as from private parlors must banish what belongs only in the stye. —[A.F.]

THE NEW CALIFORNIAN for April and May frankly avows its "pressing need" of financial support, but takes the right way to secure it by at last printing a readable article. "Scientific *versus* Christian Ethics", by Adeline E. Knapp, is singularly bright and penetrating. With great good humor and almost entire fairness it handles conventional beliefs, jauntily stripping off sham and amusedly exposing contradiction, always clever, incisive, strong. Is it true that there are more Mahometans than Buddhists in the world? Further articles by Miss Knapp will do more to gain "support" than even the despairing offer on the inside cover.—[A.F.]

LAY RELIGION, by Richard Harte. It might have antecedently seemed somewhat improbable that Mr. Harte, even allowing for his natural versatility, would enter the field of religious discussion, and indeed, strictly speaking, he has not done so now. For there is never in these 178 pages the trace of a perception that religion is the most profound of human experiences, the conscious relation of the soul to God, the reality of all realities and the motor to duty: he has no other thought of it than as an affair of intellectual beliefs and opinions, and these usually expounded by a selfish caste for its own purposes. The influence of religion he defines (page 104) as "the power of the priests"; "true religion" (page 117) as "the correct interpretation of the Cosmos". Having therefore no apprehension whatever of religion as anything more than doctrine, it would be impossible for him to treat it as a spiritual force.

Yet the consequence by no means follows that his work is either shallow or valueless. It is, on the contrary, shrewd, acute, logical, clever, vigorous, and well-informed, besides being always entertaining and sometimes witty. The attitude is that of a philosopher indifferent to the distinctions between creeds, but with some hostility to the groundwork of all and a touch of cynicism as to human nature, desirous fairly to depict every side of fact which his own limitations do not exclude from vision, and careful to state the qualifications or restrictions due to any theory. Hence not a little of truth and interest must necessarily come from so able a man and writer. To Theosophists his first chapter is the most interesting, and however acrid his tone towards the T.S. wherein he still claims membership, to H.P.B., the Esoteric Section, the Mahatmas, and Theosophic convictions generally, it is no doubt a fact that the aim and actual operations of the Society have greatly changed since its foundation. This may not prove conclusively, as Mr. Harte thinks, the absence of intervention by Mahatmas in the Society's affairs: it might even

prove the opposite, if the aim was raised and the operations made more successful: but it certainly shows that the Society has, in Mr. Harte's words, "strayed away from its original path and purpose". *Lay Religion* is to be followed by *The Old Theology*, and doubtless that will be just as clever, just as thoughtful, and just as religionless. (*Orderable through* PATH, *cloth* $1.00.)—[A.F.]

THE BOOK OF THE PATH OF VIRTUE is a version of the Chinese Philosopher Lao-tze's *Tao-Teh-King*, to which Mr. Walter R. Old has, in his ever-pleasing style, prefixed an Introduction and added a paper on "The Tao". The text is largely in the form of proverbs, a few somewhat sagacious without being strikingly profound, but most of them superficial and commonplace, and one rather wonders how wisdom of such mild quality could form the basis of a national school of philosophy. "Doors and windows", says Lao-tze, "are useful to a house by being cut out". "A virtuous man is identified with Virtue". "What is brittle is easily broken". "Virtue is good". These truths would seem to be incontestable, and the book contains others quite as much beyond the reach of successful impugnment.—[A.F.]

THE DIVINE PYMANDER, edited by W. Wynn Westcott, has an interesting preface by the editor, pointing out that by Hermes Trismegistos the three departments of arcane wisdom—Theosophy, Alchemy, and Magic—are combined, and that, despite corruptions, these seventeen chapters do enshrine the very old Egyptian ideals and are almost the only existing remains thereof. H.P.B. speaks of him as "the oldest and most spiritual of the Logoi of the Western continent", and Kenealy thinks his date to be 1800 B.C. The archaic style makes the work curious, but its break-up into brief and disconnected sentences makes it wearisome. All these ancient fragments of Sacred Learning have a place in history, yet they probably are not of great service to the practical student of to-day, who must have clearness, consecution, a modern treatment of thought, a contemporaneous sense to words. The reverent spirit and the deep cognizance of supersensuous realities do, however, always edify. (*The* PATH, *cloth*, $1.00.)—[A.F.]

THE SOURCE OF MEASURES, J. Ralston Skinner. This remarkable book, so learned, painstaking, and profound, was published nineteen years ago, but the edition has for some time been exhausted and much disappointment caused. Robert Clarke & Co. of Cincinnati have just issued a new edition, adding to it a Supplement of sixty-three pages which Mr. Skinner in 1876 printed for private circulation. The central idea is that the Egyptians, Hebrews, Romans, and probably the Hindus, used for linear measures a unit which has come down from antiquity unchanged, *the British inch*, and that this arose from the relation of the diameter of a circle to its circumference. This relation and cognate facts are elaborately treated; history, ethnology, symbolism, philology, mythology being brought to bear on the theory, and special attention being given to the construction of the Great Pyramid, the significance of the Kabbala, and the need of an esoteric interpretation to the Bible. Mr. Skinner considers that the keys to this interpretation were at one time possessed by the Roman Catholic Church, the Free Masons, and probably the Greek Church and the Brahmins. Most curious facts in rites, measurements, proportions, numerical meanings, etc., pervade the whole work, which will doubtless always remain not merely an erudite contribution to an interesting topic, but a help to those deeper truths in religion which science is now beginning to surmise. (*Orderable from* PATH: *cloth*, $5.00.)—[A.F.]

Mirror of the Movement.

"H.P.B." T.S. had May Sunday evening lectures: *Spirit and Soul*, Donald Nicholson; *The Truth about Ghosts*, James H. Connelly; *Nature and Nature's Laws*, Jos. H. Fussell; "*The Power of an Endless Life*", Alex. Fullerton.

ST. JOHN T.S., Brooklyn, N.Y., was chartered on April 27th with eight charter-members, and is the eighty-seventh Branch upon the roll. It starts with a Headquarters and a resident official, and has already planned out important works. The President is Mr. Henry C. Parke, and the Secretary Mr. Arthur D. Stetson, 365 Bedford Ave.

ARYAN T.S. lectures on Sunday evenings in May were: *Does Science teach Reincarnation*, E. B. Guild; *The Old and the New*, A. W. Wadham; *The Human Soul*, Dr. Edward G. Day; *Present-Day Theosophy*, H. T. Patterson.

GILROY T.S., Gilroy, Calif., was chartered on May 24, with eight charter-members. It is one of the fruits of the Pacific Coast Lecturer's work. It ranks eighty-eighth on the American roll. The President is Mrs. Mary A. Van Schaick, and the Secretary Mrs. Lola E. Forsyth.

MR. BURCHAM HARDING arrived at Boston Headquarters April 26th, and lectured that evening on "Seven Principles". Sunday, 29th, in the hall of the Boston Society he began a reply to statements about Theosophy made in his Bible class by Rev. Minot J. Savage, the prominent Unitarian minister. Upon that evening Mr. Harding confined himself to rebutting the accusation of dogmatism, and showing the reasonableness of the "septenary constitution"; on the following Sunday "Reincarnation" and "The Masters" were treated upon. Crowded audiences listened to these addresses, and full reports appeared in the Boston papers. At the League meeting on May 3rd, the names of twenty cities adjacent to Boston were presented. Members were called upon to assist in working up meetings, engaging halls, and making preparations for lectures. Many responses were made, and it looks as if Mr. Harding is likely to have his hands full for some time to come around Boston. Lowell was worked by Mr. H. A. Richardson, and lectures given by Mr. Harding on 16th, 17th, and 18th May. The hall was well filled each evening. The newspapers gave very full notices, with result that a considerable number have given their names to join the study class to meet there weekly. Charlestown, Lexington, Newburyport, Worcester, and Sharon have already fixed dates for meetings. Lectures have also been given at the branches at Cambridge, Malden, and Somerville. The *Secret Doctrine* class in Boston, as well as the weekly classes at Malden and Somerville, have by his advice taken up the subjects of the correspondence class for study, and the members joined that class.

On White Lotus Day the members of the Boston, Malden, Cambridge, and Somerville branches met at the Boston Hall for the memorial services. The address was given by Mr. Harding, an excellent and long report appearing in the local papers.

Very interesting accounts of White Lotus Day celebrations, condensed for PATH, have been unfortunately lost, together with other items, by a casualty in the printing-office.

INDIA.

A PROSPECTUS has been issued in and circulated through India announcing the formation of the "Brahma Vidya Prakatana Sabha", a Society to "revive Hinduism and raise the standard of Spirituality". Its methods are avowedly modelled upon those of the foreign missionaries upon Indian soil,—native schools and colleges with religious instruction, journals and leaflets, working centres, and a staff of preachers. The High Priest of the Sri Sivaganga Mutt is temporary President, but his is the only name given, and so important an enterprise needs the endorsement of many influential names. The restoration of religious sensibility and influence to a race becoming dulled through an imported secular spirit is a noble undertaking, but it may be marred, even checked, if "observances and ceremonies" are much regarded. They are even yet too numerous. The movement seems, however, to be under distinctively Theosophical auspices, and the word "Theosophy" is used.

CEYLON.

ON EASTER DAY a Reading Class was formed at Colombo, Ceylon, by the Lanka Branch and a few visitors. It will meet every Sunday at the Annie sant School. Dr. English from America is working hard to revive the nka Branch.

AUSTRALASIA.

AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND, maintains its weekly open meetings and fortnightly Sunday evening lectures, both well attended. Original lectures have been given upon *The Harvest of Life*, C. W. Sanders; *Siderial Theosophy*, S. Stuart; *The True and the False*, Mrs. Ellis; *Theosophy and the Masses, or Conceptions of God, Karma, and Reincarnation*, Mrs. Sara Draffin.

SYDNEY, N.S.W., keeps up its Theosophical activities; its fortnightly lectures, readings and discussions on Sunday evening, a weekly *Secret Doctrine* class alternately for beginners and Lodge members, the former conducted by Mrs. E. Minchen.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S TOUR.

The General Secretary lectured at Hamilton Hall, Oakland, Calif., on the evening of April 25th to about four hundred persons, the subject being "Ghosts; what and where are They?" He also had meetings with members. On the 26th he lectured at the Metropolitan Temple in San Francisco on "Mahâtmâs". This was also the subject of the lecture at Sacramento, questions being subsequently put and replied to by Messrs. Judge and Hargrove. Mr. Hargrove had previously gone down to Santa Cruz on the 24th and had lectured there and at San José, besides seeing members. Meetings were also held at the Headquarters and otherwise. On May 1st they arrived at Portland, Or., where the General Secretary lectured in Arion Hall on "Reincarnation and Karma". A visit was made to Headquarters, where members were met, and the Branch meeting on May 2d was attended. On the third they left for Seattle, where the Branch was met and addressed. On the 4th went to Victoria, B. C., and lectured in Philharmonic Hall on "Death and After". The audience of 300 was almost wholly of men. On the 5th went to Port Townsend, where the United States Steamer "Yorktown" was visited for a dinner with the Commander, after which a lecture in the evening was delivered on "Reincarnation" in "Red Men's Hall". It was crowded with 275 people. On the 7th returned to Seattle. Travel north of Seattle is slow because steamers are few, yet there is much Theosophical interest and audiences were surprisingly large. On May 10th met the Narada Branch of Tacoma at their rooms for an hour and spoke of Convention and other matters. This Branch has a good hall where some member attends each day and keeps the place always open. The evening lecture was attended by about five hundred people, and the local papers gave good reports as well as a long interview. The next afternoon left for Olympia, and lectured in the Unitarian Church that evening on "Karma and the Law of Cycles" to a small audience. On the 11th left for Portland, Or., going on thence to Salt Lake City and arriving on the evening of the 13th. Met the Branch in the President's room at 11 a.m., and others later. At 8:15 lectured in the Salt Lake Theatre on "Reincarnation and Karma", and met Branch members and inquirers on the 14th, leaving in the evening for Colorado. After stopping in Aspen Mr. Judge went to Denver, met the members there, and obtained a parlor in Albany Hall for meeting inquirers during the 18th. About twenty persons called for conversation on Theosophy, and application was made for a Branch Charter by new members and those already on the spot. The preliminary meeting was addressed by Mr. Judge and by Mr. E. M. Sasseville. Arrived in Omaha on the afternoon of the 19th, and was met by Branch President and many members. At 8 p.m. Mr. Judge held a reception at the Mercer House, and on the 20th lectured at Arcanum Hall on "Theosophy". The audience was considered good. On the 21st he left Omaha for Chicago.

The body, like any other house, will limit and annoy the user if it be kept in bad order.

OM.